



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
The Under Secretary of Commerce
for Oceans and Atmosphere
Washington, D.C. 20230

FEB 27 2013

Dear Integrated Ecosystem Assessment Team,

After four years as NOAA Administrator, I believe more than ever that NOAA plays a central role in connecting people with the natural environment. NOAA provides science, services, and stewardship that contribute to sustainable economic growth—through restoring the health of commercial and recreational fisheries, improving the resilience of America's coastal communities, and safeguarding people and physical infrastructure from hazardous weather events. NOAA generates tremendous value for the nation and our role is all the more important given the profound economic, environmental and societal challenges we have been navigating.

I've been delighted with all we've been able to do together. The agency has tackled some big challenges, and through an emphasis on transparency, integrity, innovation, team work and communication, we have made significant progress on multiple fronts. As you know, NOAA's breadth is one of our greatest challenges, but it's also our greatest strength.

To make real and measurable progress, we have relied on dedicated and focused teams of NOAA personnel who pulled together to make a difference. Much of this progress required integration of efforts across line and staff offices and with a wide variety of partners and stakeholders. Our One-NOAA approach has proven its power time and again.

It is not enough that I know about and appreciate your work. I want to take a moment to tell you directly how grateful I am for your contributions to the effort. So please consider this note a big 'Thank you!' for what you have done and are continuing to do.

In particular, I want to recognize your team's leadership and accomplishments in helping us achieve Integrated Ecosystem Assessments, a dynamic decision-support tool for management of living marine resources in the California Current and in the Gulf of Mexico.

I know that integrating diverse biological, geological, physical, and chemical information with social and economic information can be a difficult task. But this integration allows decision-makers to be informed of the trade-offs and pitfalls of management actions, and will result in better decisions and more responsible use of the ecosystem services. Through your energetic guidance and engagement, NOAA integrated the best available scientific information with the priorities of the many regional stakeholders who have a strong and vested interest in the sustainable use of their waters. This program is a model for working with the communities in which NOAA lives and works, and helping to meet the Nation's goals for the conservation and management of NOAA trust resources.



I offer my sincere congratulations and thank you to all our NOAA personnel involved in this important endeavor. Please pass this letter along to all the team members who contributed to this monumental success.

I am well aware of how much work lies ahead. But because I have experienced your impressive drive and your deep-felt dedication, I am confident that you will continue to tackle problems and devise creative solutions. Most of all, I appreciate the opportunity to work with you. I will miss you, but know you will continue devoting your energy and talents to fulfilling our mission.

I am deeply grateful for your passion, your commitment, your excellence, and your sacrifices. It is an honor to work with each of you. For now, as Administrator, I say a simple but heartfelt 'Thank You!'

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jane Lubchenco', with a large, stylized initial 'J'.

Jane Lubchenco, Ph.D.
Under Secretary of Commerce
for Oceans and Atmosphere